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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the nine profiles of exemplary school-to-work models/practices/strategies identified in the School-to-Work Outreach Project in 1995. These profiles are the result of a selection process that occurs four or five times during this 3-year project. The nine programs profiled are as follows: Choice Access, Southfield (Michigan); VECTOR: Vocational Education, Community Transition, Occupational Relations, Plymouth (Minnesota); Work Resource Program, San Francisco (California); Rural Transition Program, Sturgis (South Dakota); Minnesota Milestones, Anoka (Minnesota); Life Skills Transitional Program, Houston (Texas); Job Shadowing, Sarasota (Florida); Futures' Alternative Educational Programs, Middletown (Connecticut); and Connecting Activities, Park Ridge (Illinois). Each profile consists of these components: title, address, and telephone number; contact person; community setting; population served (program/organization, model/practice/strategy); program staff; mission; organization/program context; description; exemplary school-to-work components; what makes it work; and representative client story. (YLB)

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School-to-Work Outreach Project
1995 Exemplary Models/Practices/Strategies.

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Choice Access
United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit, Inc.
23077 Greenfield, Suite 205
Southfield, MI 48075-3744
(810) 557-5070

Mission

United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit, Inc. believes strongly in the right to self-determination and independence for all persons regardless of any physical, mental or emotional limitation that society calls a "disability".

Organization/Program Context

United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit (UCP) is a consumer advocacy, non-profit organization for persons with disabilities. Choice Access is one of four programs of UCP; these programs provide a variety of services in the areas of advocacy, housing, SSI/Medicaid and parent training. Choice Access is a grant obtained by the National United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc. (UCPA) located in Washington, D.C. The grant is implemented in Pittsburgh, New Orleans and Detroit. These three sites collaborate by meeting once a year to discuss successes and concerns, share information and solve problems regarding Choice Access. Periodically during the year the three sites connect through teleconferences and internet.

Description

The primary goal of Choice Access is to ensure smooth, customer driven access to employment related services and supports for individuals with significant (severe) disabilities, resulting in meaningful and successful employment. Choice Access is supported by a grant from the U.S. Office of Rehabilitation. The funding is used by each customer to buy appropriate services to assist him/her in finding and maintaining employment. This is a consumer driven program: the individual sets his/her goals, hires and fires providers and uses a voucher system to pay providers when he/she is satisfied with the services provided.

Students are referred to Choice Access by school personnel, family members, other service agencies, or by self referral. People involved with the students in Choice Access work with educators to ensure that the schools support the students' participation in community-based work and that they receive credit for the time spent in the workplace. Educators might also participate in meetings where their students' involvement in employment and the community is discussed.

The individual makes choices at every step of the program. First, the Choice Coordinator and student work together to develop a Person Directed Plan. The plan offers possible solutions to problems such as housing, Medicaid, SSI and transportation. This plan includes, but is not limited to, the natural supports and community supports that are defined by the individual's needs. The student then interviews and selects an Employment Advisor, such as another person with a disability who has experience in the

Contact Person

Barbara Cardinal
Associate Executive Director
(810) 557-5070

Community Setting

Major City. The Metropolitan area of Detroit is served by Choice Access and UCP.

Population Served

Program/Organization
UCP of Metro Detroit serves individuals from birth to death. However, the majority of individuals served are adults with severe disabilities of the ages 22 years and older. Consumers are not required to share information regarding their disability, so this information is based on information and referral calls received by UCP.

Model/Practice/Strategy
Choice Access serves 15 individuals per year. Presently there are 29 persons with severe disabilities in the program and almost half of them come form the school age population. Choice Access serves individuals who are at least 18 years old and who want to work. Of these participants, the majority are of the ages 22 and older with some 18 - 22 years old. (In Michigan, special education students are in the public education system until the age of 26.)

Program Staff

Executive Director
1 full-time
- Administers the larger organization (UCP)

Associate Executive Director
1 full-time
- Supervises all programs and staff of UCP

Choice Coordinator
1 full-time
- Implements the Choice Access program

Employment Advisor
part-time, hired by customer (student) on an individual basis
- Empowers student by providing support and advice
- Teaches student adult life and work skills such as how to interview a provider
- Helps student solve transition and work-related problems
- Attends student 's meetings related to his/her Person Directed Plan

rehabilitation services system and has been successfully employed in the community. Throughout a student's participation in Choice Access he/she continues to have contact with the Employment Advisor who offers advice and support when needed.

Initially, the Employment Advisor aids the student in hiring providers who will develop a Vocational Profile. This profile includes all transition areas of interest and need, but concentrates on opportunities in the community for gainful employment. The Vocational Profile lists the top 5-15 job choices of the individual. A Job Developer is hired to implement this plan, concentrating on the first five job choices of the student. First, the Job Developer finds jobs that match the student's list and then makes initial contacts with the employers. When an appropriate job is found and it is accepted by the student the Job Developer assesses the workplace for possible adaptations. Then a Job Facilitator is hired to provide job coaching (the Job Facilitator may or may not be the same person as the Job Developer). The employer, Job Facilitator and the student meet to develop a work plan which might include job coaching, job training and accommodations. The job training would be the same training available to any employee and natural supports would be put into place the first day the student begins the job. To confirm agreement of the plan, the document is signed by its authors. Job facilitation is available as long as the student feels he/she needs the support, however, the Job Facilitator begins to fade support from the beginning.

The student chooses to close contact with Choice Access when he/she is comfortable at the job and is no longer in need of assistance from providers. If funds remain the student can place half into a special UCPA account to be used later for job enhancement. The other half of the money goes back to the general funds to be used by someone who needs more assistance in getting a job. The success of this program is evident in the students' acknowledgment that they are successful; they tell the Choice Access staff that they feel better about themselves and they have what they need to find work that interests them. The students are making a difference in their own world and they are a great example of what happens when you listen to the customer.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Student-focused Career Planning - School-based Learning
Students plan their futures through the Person Directed Plan and their careers with the Employment Plan. Decisions regarding service providers and place of employment are made by each student and these decisions are respected!

Employment and Community Connections - Connecting Activity
The Choice Access program empowers students with significant physical challenges to become employed in jobs of their choosing, outside of segregated work environments. The self advocacy skills students develop as they purchase services and interact with employers and others in the community are invaluable.

What Makes it Work?

Student Focused
Each student sets goals, hires and fires service providers and determines when he/she has been successful.

Employment Advisors
This person, chosen by the student, acts both as an advocate and a role model. The Employment Advisor assists the student in assessing his/her needs and then choosing appropriate services. This interaction allows the student to become more self assured and develops leadership and self-advocacy skills, all which lead to self-improvement.

Carolyn's Story

We wish you could meet Carolyn. She's a special person with a drive to succeed. Michigan's special education system includes students until the age of 26 years old. Carolyn was 24 years old and she wanted to leave school but felt she had no options. However, her teacher heard about Choice Access and she referred Carolyn to the program. Carolyn met with the program staff and decided to join Choice Access; it provided a way for her to leave a segregated school and get out into the community. Carolyn came alive because she was given the chance to do something she really wanted to do!

Carolyn made some wise choices in using the money she received for planning and placement in a job. She chose a provider who found a job that she preferred - working in a child care facility. Yet just when it looked like everything was coming together she met a stumbling block. A teacher at her school told the prospective employer that she couldn't work there because she had cerebral palsy and belonged in a workshop. With the support of her Employment Facilitator, Choice Coordinator, and staff at United Cerebral Palsy, Carolyn overcame this obstacle and got the job. In the process, she has shown that people with severe disabilities can be successful, despite what others might tell them!

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Carolyn was given a choice of career and she was supported and encouraged to follow through with the decisions she made.

For Further Information

School-to-Work Outreach Project
Institute on Community Integration (UAP)
University of Minnesota
101D Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612)626-8155; fax (612)624-9344
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/schooltowork/

School-to-work is described in the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994.

School to work is . . .

A System built to provide opportunities for students to learn about and experience work while in school.

Educational Reform that addresses the need for students to gain work experience and workplace skills while in school.

Partnerships between schools, employers and communities.

For <u>All</u> Students, kindergarten through 12th grade.

School-to-Work Outreach Project Overview

The School-to-Work Outreach Project at the Institute on Community Integration (UAP) is a nationwide, three year prroject funded by the U.S. Department of Education. This project assists and supports school-to-work initiatives through the identification of exemplary school-to-work models/practices/strategies that include students with disabilities. Exemplary school-to-work models/practices/strategies are identified through a five step selection process:

- **Nomination**
- **Application**
- **Reference**
- **Application Review**
- **Final Review and Selection**

Identification Criteria and school-to-work Priority Areas established by the School-to-Work Outreach Project guide the application review.

Profiles of the identified models/practices/strategies are available upon request. Adoption and replication of these exemplary school-to-work activities is encouraged and technical assistance is available to schools and organizations interested in implementing these models/practices/strategies or improving existing school-to-work activities and systems. Contact the School-to-Work Outreach Project at the above address for further information.

Basic Elements of School-to-Work

School-based Learning - Instruction and experiences based on academic and occupational standards.

Work-based Learning - Workplace experience, structured training, mentoring and apprenticeships at job sites.

Connecting Activities - A variety of activities that build and maintain bridges between school, work and other adult environments.

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VECTOR: Vocational Education, Community Transition, Occupational Relations

Intermediate District 287, Hennepin Technical College
1820 Xenium Lane North
Plymouth, MN 55441
(612) 536-0872

Mission

To provide transition services and training to young adults with disabilities (ages 18 to 22) as they progress from educational settings toward working and living as independently as possible in the community.

Organization/Program Context

VECTOR is a special education service of Intermediate School District 287 which serves thirteen member school districts in a greater metropolitan area. The VECTOR program is located on both the North and South campuses of Hennepin Technical College and at one satellite office near the north campus.

Description

Students come to VECTOR with varying interests, goals and abilities. Some students have completed their high school credits and their diploma is being held until their Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are completed. Others continue to work on earning credit towards their high school diploma. VECTOR is student centered, with emphasis on students taking responsibility for their lives. Students are given encouragement and support to plan for and reach their transition and work goals. For example, a student may find an area of interest and ask VECTOR staff to help him/her seek employment in that area. In the meantime, the student can take classes at the technical college in his/her area of interest. Each student has an advisor who meets with him/her weekly to develop, implement or modify his/her plans as needed.

VECTOR includes a school-based component, making available both secondary and post-secondary vocational classes at the technical college (which lead to certification and diplomas) as well as classes specifically developed for VECTOR students. Additional support is available to students four times a week in the form of technical tutors, one-on-one help and Vocational Preparation (a guided study hall led by VECTOR teaching staff). One of VECTOR's Special Education Instructors acts as a full-time vocational liaison on both campuses. He works directly with VECTOR students and vocational instructors to insure that students have adequate support in their field of study and to assist instructors in making necessary modifications, for example, curriculum presentation and accessibility accommodations. VECTOR classes such as Applied Vocational Skills focus on job interviewing, job seeking/keeping, resume development and other work related skills. Other classes include discussion and activities regarding appropriate behavior at work and provide opportunities to address specific problems students may be having on the job. These classes include: Strategies for Problem Solving,

Contact Person

Darla Jackson
Coordinator
(612) 536-0872

Community Setting

Major city. VECTOR is located in a large metropolitan area. Student tuition for the technical college is paid through special education and general education funding.

Population Served

Program/Organization
See information below.

Model/Practice/Strategy
Most students are from 18 - 22 years old. A few students are 17 years old. The majority of students served have mild mental retardation or specific learning disabilities as their primary diagnosis. Other students have the following primary disabilities: speech or language impaired, blindness, visual disabilities, behavioral/emotional disturbance, autism, deaf or hard of hearing, traumatic brain injury and physical/other health impaired.

Program Staff

Program Coordinator
3 full-time, 2 part-time
- Manages and coordinates program
- Manages final development and completion of Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Work Experience Coordinator
6 full-time
- Develops jobs & coordinates job placement
- Directs transition to post school employment

Special Education Instructor
13 full-time, 4 part-time
- Instructs VECTOR classes
- Advises and supports students
- Performs student assessment
- Develops curriculum

Sign Language Interpreter
2 full-time, 2 part-time
- Interprets using sign language

Special Education Assistant
19 full-time, 8 part-time
- Provides job coaching for students
- Instructional assistant in school and community
- Transports students

Social Worker
2 full-time
- Provides individual student support

Adaptive P.E. Instructor
1 full-time
- Develops/monitors individual fitness plans
- Leads recreation / leisure activities

Communication Disorder Specialist
1 full-time
- Assesses, instructs and monitors student pragmatic skills
- Develops augmentative systems as necessary

Social Skills and a group session led by the school social worker.

The work-based component of VECTOR is called Community-Based Vocational Assessment and Training. Students may be involved in one of the three following work options:

- Career Exploration: This program gives students initial exposure to work in the community and allows for exploration in several vocational areas. Students are placed at job sites in the community from 2 - 4 hours a day for 6 - 8 weeks. They are directly supervised by a vocational trainer (Special Education Assistant).
- Supervised Competitive Employment: Students are employed as a team of 2 to 6 individuals who work for 1 - 4 hours per day. The students are fully supervised by a vocational trainer (Special Education Assistant).
- Independent Competitive Employment: Students are initially trained in their job by VECTOR staff and/or the employer. A Work Experience Coordinator periodically monitors the student at his/her work site.

Transportation to job sites is provided by the VECTOR Program during school hours.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Student-centered Planning - School-based Learning
Students take responsibility for their educational plans by taking a leadership role in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) conferences. VECTOR staff are available for guidance, support and trouble shooting. Students are encouraged to get outside opinions and assistance from their families, social workers, rehabilitation counselors and advocates. They are also given training in self advocacy skills.

Age Appropriate Setting - Connecting Activity
The VECTOR Program is based on two campuses of a technical college. Students are in an age appropriate adult setting with access to all vocational programs and classes. Additional classroom and office space is leased in an office building near one of the campuses. Students also have the opportunity to increase independent living skills in accessible apartments in a nearby complex.

Collaboration - Connecting Activity
VECTOR collaborates with Intermediate School District programs at the point of student assessment and consultation of appropriate services. In addition, county and social services are involved with the program as students access their services and continue to use them after they leave school. Collaborators may include: the Division of Rehabilitation Services, County Social Services, and Centers for Independent Living.

What Makes it Work?

Flexibility
VECTOR is constantly changing and expanding to meet the needs of the students and their families. For example, in the current year low vision

students came to the VECTOR program. This required additional services from the staff. Because of frequent change the staff and administration must be flexible, independent and open to new ideas. The connection between VECTOR and the Intermediate School District enables flexibility because the staff are able to pull from a variety of services and information sources when responding to change.

Strong Support from High Schools

Strong relationships with the local high schools are necessary to ensure effective transition programming and planning. The high schools' staff know what VECTOR provides and how students benefit from the program. As a result the staff are confident about making referrals and they prepare students well for the program.

Collaboration

Good connections with state and county service agencies (i.e. Division of Rehabilitation, State Services for the Blind and County Social Workers) are essential in creating a strong support system for the students. Representatives from collaborating agencies are a part of each student's IEP team.

Tom's Story

Tom is a 21 year old young man with mild mental retardation. During his two years in the VECTOR Program he completed course work in a variety of independent living skills classes, gaining skills in problem solving and self advocacy. For one of these years he also took classes in the secondary Building Trades Program at Hennepin Technical College.

During this year Tom learned that the field of building trades continued to be a strong vocational interest, but that his academic skill level limited employment options. The VECTOR vocational liaison and the building trades instructor encouraged Tom to pursue an alternative program in the same career cluster. He entered the post-secondary Painting and Decorating program in July, 1994. With extensive support from family, the vocational liaison, the technical tutor and instructor, Tom successfully earned his diploma on April 21, 1995. Three days later Tom began full-time employment with benefits as an apprentice for a painting and decorating contractor.

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Program Staff continued

Occupational Therapist

1 full-time

- Assesses and monitors students
- Modifies work and learning environments

Physical Therapist

1 full-time

- Assesses and monitors students
- Modifies work and learning environments

Other Specialists

The following staff are hired as needed:

- Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Teacher of the Physically Impaired
- Teacher of the Blind/Vision Impaired

Tom came to VECTOR with an interest in the area of Building Trades. VECTOR staff gave him support and encouragement in the pursuit of this interest.

For Further Information

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Work Resource Program (WRP)
Jewish Vocational & Career Counseling Service
77 Geary Street, Suite 401
San Francisco, CA 94108
(415) 391-3600

WORK RESOURCE PROGRAM

Mission

To provide leadership and ensure a high quality, effective program by setting a common vision and goals, monitoring progress, resolving problems, facilitating open communications, conducting ongoing needs assessment and evaluation, in order to coordinate resources and to assist targeted students with disabilities in San Francisco, to better them for the world of work and to ultimately strengthen our community.

Organization/Program Context

The Work Resource Program (WRP) is a collaboration of seven organizations: Jewish Vocational and Career Counseling Service (JVS), Bridges... from school to work, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Department of Special Education, SFUSD Department of State and Federally Funded Programs, Private Industry Council of San Francisco, San Francisco Division of Community Mental Health, and California State Department of Rehabilitation. Two organizations are active participants in WRP, providing direct services and staff. JVS is the lead and fiscal agent, and Bridges.... school to work is a subcontractor.

Description

The Work Resource Program (WRP) serves youth from many ethnic backgrounds of the ages 14 - 18. The program is comprised of both school-based learning and work-based activities. The school-based component, WRP Classroom, focuses on job readiness skills. This class reaches 265 students in 9th and 10th grade at schools and adolescent day treatment centers throughout San Francisco. Vocational Specialists teach the classes which are scheduled from 2-3 days a week, depending upon the school or center. The curriculum includes a variety of subjects: career exploration, understanding employer expectations, developing positive work attitudes and behaviors, building self esteem and work maturity, and learning job seeking skills.

Work-based learning is an integal part of WRP. Summer Jobs provides individualized training and support to 75 youth, targeting 10th grade students. Students are placed in various jobs (both competitive and supported employment) and are paid a stipend or wage, depending on their employer. Job coaches are available to povide individualized support at the level needed by the student. Two other services provided are a drop-in summer jobs clinic and employer advocacy. The drop-in clinic is a place where students can get job counseling and participate in activities such as attending a career fair or a workshop on how to find a job. Employer advocacy is available to employers participating in the Summer Jobs activity. JVS staff is available to answer any workplace questions or concerns regarding the students hired for the summer.

Contact Person

Kim Mazzuca
Assistant Director
(415) 391-3600

Community Setting

Major city. Students from throughout the city are served in this program. Both state and city organizations are involved in the collaborative effort.

Population Served

Program/Organization
See information below.

Model/Practice/Strategy
The Work Resource Program serves 270 students, the majority who have specific learning disabilities and some who have serious emotional disturbance. Students are from 14-18 years old.

Program Staff

Director of Rehabilitation (JVS)
1 full-time
- Coordinates referrals
- Conducts program development and planning
- Develops and monitors budgets and expenses
- Develops grants and contracts

Program Supervisor (JVS)
1 full-time
- Develops, implements, evaluates and monitors the program
- Acts as liaison to community-based organizations, all project collaborators, local high schools and the business community

Vocational Specialist (JVS)
4 full-time
- Teaches WRP Classroom
- Conducts the Summer Jobs Program
- Performs job coaching and job development
- Provides individualized assistance to students as needed

Vocational Aide (JVS)
1 full-time
- Performs clerical duties
- Compiles data for program reports
- Assists instructors and Vocational Specialist

Work Counselor (Bridges... school to work)
2 full-time
- Develops stipended employment sites
- Performs job coaching
- Maintains communication with employers, families, service providers, and all other relevant parties

Work Experience is another work-based activity and is available to 50 students in 10th grade who work for one semester. WRP provides pre-employment support services (i.e. travel training) as well as support on the work site: job coaching, troubleshooting and addressing work issues as they arise. The students work after school or on the weekends. Some may receive a stipend while others who are in competitive employment are paid wages. At the end of the 10th grade students are referred to Transition Opportunities Program or TOP (supported by the California Department of Rehabilitation) for transition planning, additional work experience and job placement.

Prevocational Program for Students with Severe Disabilities is yet another component of WRP. It includes a combination of school-based and work-based learning for five students. A Work Counselor instructs the students, individually and in groups, on work adjustment issues using the WRP Classroom curriculum. The Work Counselor also arranges paid or volunteer work experiences for the students to reinforce classroom learning and to provide exposure to the world of work.

JVS and Community Vocational Enterprises/Keystone recently received a Federal grant which will allow them to provide WRP classroom and supported employment to 11th and 12th grade youth with severe emotional disturbance. This new component of the Work Resource Program is being initiated.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Collaboration - Connecting Activity
The Work Resource Program is a collaborative effort of seven different organizations and agencies (see "Program/Organization Context"). These agencies are involved in a variety of ways, such as supporting and implementing the program and conducting staff workshops and trainings. The Continuum Steering Committee oversees the program, and is committed to the realization of its goals and objectives. The committee consists of representatives from member agencies of the collaborative.

Program Evaluation - School-Based Learning
An independent evaluator conducts the evaluation of the Work Resource Program. Students, parents and teachers participated in year one of the evaluation. In the coming year employers will also be asked to participate. Evaluation methods include focus groups and surveys/questionnaires. The evaluation is essential to the program as it ensures that the program design and resources are improving students' vocational readiness and that this complements the standard special education curriculum which addresses vocational readiness.

What Makes it Work?

Collaboration
The program is a collaborative effort, with various agencies responsible for funding and staff. Collaboration with county and state agencies assures a continuation of work-based experiences to students as they continue through school and into the adult working world.

Program Evaluation
Evaluation is critical to the evolution and planning of the program, as data and feedback influences the direction of the program.

Maria's Story

Maria entered the Work Resource Program at the adolescent day treatment center she had been attending for three years. Maria is diagnosed with severe emotional disturbance. According to the center's staff, she was self-destructive in class yet she was a precocious reader but painfully withdrawn whenever an attempt was made to get her to participate. Maria entered a vocational education class which she seemed to enjoy. Her behavior improved as well as her attendance. Her mother urged her to take a child care position so that she could become a better caretaker of her two younger brothers. For three years during the summer she worked as a preschool child care counselor with a youth employment program.

Maria enrolled in the Work Resource Program Classroom. The class, taught by a Vocational Specialist, covers applied subjects such as job applications, resumes, and cover letters as well as social skills, decision making and on-the-job conflict resolution. The Vocational Specialist was impressed with Maria's energy in class but saw that it needed to be channeled more appropriately. She worked with her on self-presentation and communication skills. Maria's behavior improved - she became a positive classroom leader and the teacher's aid. She recorded key words on the blackboard, encouraged participation from reserved classmates and helped individuals who were having difficulties with written assignments. She was the one who kept the WRP class in order when other students were acting out.

The Vocational Specialist asked Maria about her job interests, separate from her mother's expectations. Maria told her that she had never been asked that question and that she had always dreamed of "doing office work for a big, very influential agency." The Vocational Specialist learned that Maria would much rather collate files than quell preschool fights.

That summer a two month office clerk position was developed and it was to be filled by one WRP student. Maria and five other students expressed an interest in this job at a large downtown architecture firm. Maria, filled with self-doubt about entering the world of work beyond her summer program, was the last of the students to interview. After the interview the personnel manager told the Vocational Specialist that she was particularly impressed by Maria's poised and professional appearance. Maria was offered the job.

For the next two months the Vocational Specialist checked on Maria's job performance with weekly telephone calls to Maria's supervisor and visits to the job site. By the end of her two months with the firm Maria learned to operate a main-line switchboard, organize a mass mailing and perform data entry on a computer. She had missed only one day of work and had never been late. On the last day of Maria's term of employment the Vocational Specialist received an unexpected telephone call. Maria spoke in an excited voice, "I wanted you to be the first to know that my supervisor has asked me to stay on a month-to-month basis." That afternoon she entered the firm's new employment training program. Three months later Maria is still their successful employee.

* * * * * *

In the classroom, Maria learned valuable communication, decision making and conflict resolution skills that helped her secure a job in the area of her interest.

For Further Information

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School-to-Work Outreach Project Overview

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- **Nomination**
- **Application**
- **Reference**
- **Application Review**
- **Final Review and Selection**

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Basic Elements of School-to-Work

School-based Learning - Instruction and experiences based on academic and occupational standards.

Work-based Learning - Workplace experience, structured training, mentoring and apprenticeships at job sites.

Connecting Activities - A variety of activities that build and maintain bridges between school, work and other adult environments.

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Rural Transition Program
Black Hills Special Services Cooperative
PO Box 218
Sturgis, SD 57785
(605) 347-4467

Mission

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative is a multi-service agency whose mission is to provide specialized services desired by the agencies it serves.

Organization/Program Context

The Black Hills Special Services Cooperative (BHSSC) is a multi-service cooperative that includes twelve school districts as members. The cooperative is considered a public school and is administered by one publicly elected school board official from each of the twelve local member districts. The cooperative provides two kinds of services: 1) vocational/educational programs and 2) technical assistance, facilitation and consultation to school districts. Programs are administered from five divisions within the cooperative: Technology and Innovations in Education, Alternative Programs, Developmental Disabilities Programs, Employment Services/Manufacturing, and Vocational/Economic Development. The Rural Transition Program is directed by the Supported Employment/Manufacturing division with overlapping services from the Developmental Disabilities Program and the Alternative Program.

Description

The Rural Transition Program provides transition services on an individual basis to students living in communities served by the cooperative. The students are referred to the program by their schools, vocational rehabilitation and other agencies, or walk-ins. The project staff works with each student to develop an individualized plan and then to guide them through the community transition process. A vocational assessment is used to learn about the student's preparedness for community jobs and their basic work skills and work readiness. These assessments are ongoing, used throughout a students involvement with BHSSC. Students have the opportunity to take classes on workplace skills using an employability curriculum provided by BHSSC. This curriculum is modified to fit the abilities of the students and includes subjects such as job seeking, job keeping and work maturity.

Work-based learning is included in every student's transition plan. There are two types of placements available to all students: Career Awareness/Work Experience and Entrepreneurial Sites. The Career Awareness/Work Experience program is a job shadowing rotation through five work sites: volunteer work, preschool day care, motel cleaning and fast food restaurant or park service jobs. Each work site is used for 3 - 4 weeks. The program allows students to experience a variety of jobs, gaining information to help them choose an area of interest. Entrepreneurial Sites allow for longer placements in integrated, community manufacturing operations created through partnerships between

Contact Persons

Randall Morris
Executive Director
(605) 347-4467

Mary Baumeister
Deputy Executive Director
(605) 347-4467

Community Setting

Small city. BHSSC provides services statewide. The Rural Transition Program services rural communities in western South Dakota.

Population Served

Program/Organization
The Black Hills Special Services Cooperative serves 193 individuals: children, youth and adults who are in need of special services. Almost half of these individuals are 14 - 18 years old. The majority of individuals served have mental retardation as a primary diagnosis, other persons with disabilities have serious emotional disturbance and autism.

Model/Practice/Strategy
This program currently serves 140 individuals from the ages of 13 - 22. The primary diagnosis of participating students is mental retardation, some students have serious emotional disturbance.

Program Staff

Special Education Teachers
9 full-time
- Implements student Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Conducts evaluation assessment and data collection
- Instructs workplace skills class

Classroom Aides
13 full-time
- Assists in classroom instruction

Transition Specialist
1 full-time
- Develops and implements curriculum
- Coordinates and collaborates with existing service providers

Job Developers
2 full-time
- Evaluates student needs within the pre-vocational setting
- Provides job site training and on going support and guidance to students, employers and businesses
- Serves as primary contact for vocational placement services

Job Coaches and Life Skills Coaches
4 full-time
- Directs on the job training
- Facilitates efficient running of the work site

Speech Therapist
1 full-time
- Evaluates and assesses student communication skills
- Implements communication goals of IEP
- Provides information on appropriate computer software and classroom materials
- Directs speech/language therapy

Program Coordinator
4 full-time
- Assesses the comprehensive needs of the student
- Links student with appropriate services
- Monitors services provided to student

BHSSC and private businesses. The sites hire both production workers from the community and BHSSC students with disabilities who use job coaches. Beyond the Career Awareness/Work Experience and Entrepreneurial Sites programs are individual job placements for students ready to enter competitive employment. Depending on the individual's interest and skills, placements are made in jobs available in the community.

The person-centered services characteristic of BHSSC require ongoing monitoring of student progress and discussion of their interests and needs. Student progress is monitored on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, and is summarized to comply with the evaluation requirements of various agencies involved with the program and the cooperative as well as to enhance and improve services. This information is stored in student files and computer databases.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Job Placement - Work-based Activity
Two different types of job placement are available to all students: Career Awareness/Work Experience and Entrepreneurial Sites. These work activities allow students to gain workplace skills and an understanding of their job interests and abilities. In addition, some students work in competitive employment at a job of their interest in a local business or agency.

Community Based - Connecting Activity
BHSSC is governed by twelve school districts who seek to receive services for people with disabilities in their hometowns. Appropriate community services are accessed to fulfill student needs and BHSSC works with the public schools to provide school-based vocational training and transition education for the students as needed. Business partnerships such as the entrepreneurial sites bring to rural towns job opportunities for students with disabilities as well as other community members.

Assessment and Evaluation - Connecting Activity
Evaluation of the larger organization involves collecting data on demographics and consumer satisfaction. On an individual level student progress is monitored daily, weekly and monthly. In addition to fulfilling the organization and other agencies' requirements, the results of monitoring and evaluation are used to enhance programs and to identify the needs of programs and individual students.

What Makes it Work?

Person-centered Services
All programming is based on individual student/family wants and needs. This is stressed in the organizational philosophy as well as program activities and staff trainings. Because of this individual planning the Rural Transition Program is different for every student, as their individual needs, goals and background differ.

Collaboration
The Rural Transition Program collaborates with other programs and services of the cooperative, human services and rehabilitation agencies and the member school districts to fulfill the needs of every individual served. Collaboration with private and local business is also essential to the job placement opportunities offered.

Donna's Story

When Donna enrolled at Black Hills Special Services Cooperative at age 17 she faced a series of challenges that surprised her. Donna has mild mental retardation and an epileptic seizure disorder. She had fears of seizures while alone and required assistance with her medications, therefore epilepsy was considered her primary disability. Donna came to the Rural Transition Program from a highly structured, 24-hour program where she knew few opportunities to make minor day-to-day choices, let alone life-altering ones. Nonetheless, at BHSSC planning meetings she identified two long term goals upon graduation: to live in her hometown (but not with her family) and to work in competitive employment.

With Donna setting the direction and pace of her program, BHSSC staff found a foster home where she could gradually work toward the level of independence she desired. Her hometown was 200 miles from BHSSC, so living in her natural home was not an option, although her natural family was very much involved in her life. Donna was mainstreamed into classes at Lead High School, a member school of BHSSC. The cooperative's vocational education staff directed her through a series of job experiences over a four year period.

Donna worked at an Entrepreneurial Site, a textile product plant, where she and other persons with disabilities worked alongside employees without disabilities. She demonstrated impressive work habits and was highly motivated by earning paychecks. Her next job was in the Black Hills. She was part of a crew that cleared forest lands of downed timber to reduce the fire hazard. Donna determined she was no outdoorswoman, and she quit, pleased to be part of a system that let her move on and feeling that she had learned something important about herself. She later took a job cleaning motel rooms and found it enjoyable and rewarding.

Donna's family was more surprised and challenged by her advancement than Donna herself. They knew her as a person shaped by the confines of her sheltered environment and therefore needed the support of the cooperative as Donna tackled things that they assumed were beyond her. Central to that support was regular communication.

After four years, Donna graduated with her Lead classmates, receiving a diploma saying she had completed the Rural Transition Program. Among her most vivid memories are her vocational experiences and helping to build the first place Homecoming float. True to her goals, Donna now lives in her hometown, in her own apartment where she is responsible for her seizure medications. She is employed cleaning rooms for the city's largest hotel and convention center.

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Program Staff continued

Bus Driver
10 full-time
- Conducts safe operation of buses
- Follows prescribed loading and unloading procedures for all students
- Follows guidelines regarding student transportation and parent contact

Residential Assistant
20 full-time
- Provides direct care to individuals in a group home
- Assists paraprofessionals in all facets of instruction as dictated by IEP's

Working in a variety of jobs, Donna eventually found her job area of interest.

For Further Information

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Minneapolis, MN 55455
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Minnesota Milestones
Rise, Inc. & Anoka-Hennepin ISD #11
403 Jackson Street, Suite #101
Anoka, MN 55303
(612) 427-3327

Rise

Mission

Rise supports people with disabilities in attaining their personal measure of vocational achievement, self-sufficiency, and belonging in their communities. Rise is dedicated to building a community which is more accepting of all of its citizens and we support the development of creative partnerships with businesses, governmental agencies, and the general public to meet this objective.

Organization/Program Context

Minnesota Milestones is a three year national demonstration project supported by a Federal grant from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. The Project is a collaborative effort which includes Anoka-Hennepin Independent School District #11 and Rise, Inc., an adult service provider that is the fiscal agent and the organization responsible for staffing. Transition Plus and Bell Center, both alternative education programs of the Anoka-Hennepin school district, are partners in Minnesota Milestones, providing additional services and supports to the students.

Description

Minnesota Milestones provides services to students with serious emotional disorders, emotional/behavior disturbances and cognitive disabilities who are currently enrolled in the school district's partner programs: Transition Plus and Bell Center. Most students have not earned enough credits to get their high school diplomas, but are working towards their diplomas in the Transition Plus program. Time-limited job services that are available from Minnesota Milestones include: job assessment/career exploration, on-site job training, natural supports, post-secondary supported education and competitive job placement. Supported employment services are offered to students, both at individual and group job sites. Students are referred to the project by Individual Education Plan (IEP) case managers and work coordinators.

Upon referral to Minnesota Milestones each student meets with the project staff to discuss his/her needs and to determine if counseling services are needed. The student then begins to develop his/her career plan. The career plan is a comprehensive document which asks for a student's interests, likes, dislikes, work history, living situation, financial needs, etc. The plan also includes information collected from relevant people in each student's life (i.e. family, friends, school personnel, rehabilitation counselors, social workers). Each career plan contains the student's goals for employment and education. The career plan is used by project staff to assist the student in meeting his/her goals. IEP case managers aid students who wish to access

Contact Person

Jon Alexander
Service Team Leader
(612) 427-3327

Community Setting

Large City. Minnesota Milestones is located in a suburb of a large metropolitan area. The Anoka-Hennepin School District is the second largest district in the state.

Population Served

Organization/Program
Rise, Inc. serves over 1,500 individuals from the ages of 16 to 65 years old. Rise is a private, nonprofit organization that provides a variety of employment, day training and habilitation and housing services for individuals with disabilities, individuals who are economically disadvantaged and persons without disabilities in affirmative industry. Anoka-Hennepin School District includes 4 high schools.

Model/Practice/Strategy
Minnesota Milestones serves approximately 55 students per year. The majority of the students are of the ages 18 - 22, with some students from 16 - 18. Minnesota Milestones serves students with serious emotional disorders, emotional/behavioral disturbances, and cognitive disabilities.

Project Staff

Service Team Leader
1 full-time
- Coordinates the program
- Oversees collaborative activities with Anoka-Hennepin schools and other agencies
- Schedules and facilitates Interagency Advisory Council Meetings
- Provides staff support to Parent Advisory Council

Job Placement Specialists
2 full-time
- Coordinates job placement services including job training
- Works with students and others involved to develop and implement individual student career plans and to access resources
- Performs job/task analysis to match jobs with candidates
- Provides training, support and information to employers working with students with disabilities

Student Support Specialist
1 full-time
- Meets with school staff to identify students in need of services
- Meets each student and his/her family to discuss the student's needs
- Aids student in accessing adult services
- Provides independent living services to students
- Integrates the student's many plans (i.e., IEP, Career Plan and Transition Plan)

Chief Operating Officer
1 part-time
- General project management

post-secondary education.

Minnesota Milestones utilizes a natural job supports model. The idea of natural supports is to utilize people that are already available in a business or the community to support individuals at their job. This includes the use of supervisors, co-workers, family members, neighbors and friends who can support the student in their employment and assist in the areas of supervision, transportation and leisure activities. Project staff also consult with each employer and provide strategies for training and supervision of persons with disabilities.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Career Plan - School-based Learning
Each student develops a career plan which considers personal information, interests and goals. The student is responsible for working toward the goals that he/she writes in the career plan. Checks and balances are built into the plan to deal with unrealistic expectations and the student can change or amend any part of the plan. For example, if a student finds his/her employment situation to be inappropriate, he/she will change the plan to focus on another area of employment.

Effective Support Systems - Connecting Activity
Collaboration between project staff and the school district administration has contributed to the effective support systems of this program. To help students in their pursuit of productive employment and community living, Minnesota Milestones also works in partnership with local agencies such as the state Division of Rehabilitation Services, county community health and social services and employers associations. The result is a support system that extends beyond high school and youth services and into adult services.

Natural Supports Model - Connecting Activity
Students are encouraged to use people involved in their everyday life (such as family members, neighbors and co-workers) for support in areas such as work, transportation and recreation/leisure activities.

What Makes it Work?

Location of Services
Project Staff are located in the same building as Transition Plus, an alternative education program that refers students to Minnesota Milestones. This allows staff easy access to students and facilitates collaboration between project staff and teachers in the provision and coordination of services. In addition, the location of the project is accessible by the public bus service.

Flexible Schedule
Minnesota Milestones provides services beyond the school calendar and school hours; this includes school holidays and summer hours. As a result, students can access services even if they work or go to school during the day.

Staff
The project staff are dedicated and professional. They go above and beyond the call of duty. This commitment is necessary for providing effective services to students.

David's Story

When David returned to high school in the Fall of 1994 his planning team determined that he needed assistance in career planning, school-to-work transition services and job development. David was referred to the Minnesota Milestones program. The group also felt that the traditional high school setting was not meeting David's particular needs and that he would probably benefit more from the school district's Transition Plus Program.

David met with Milestones staff to discuss the program as well as his interests and goals. He then began to develop his career plan which included collecting information on his interests, strengths and work history. Given this information, the staff suggested that David gain more work experience and they began to look for an appropriate position for him. Sara, a Placement Specialist, took the lead and eventually found a job that would capitalize on David's ability to work well with others. At a local restaurant David was paired with another student from Transition Plus. Together they did the morning set-up work at the restaurant. David was responsible for overseeing the work of his co-worker, and for completing the tasks his partner was unable to do. He also worked the lunch rush as a bus person. This arrangement went extremely well. However, after a few months at this job David decided that he needed to make more money. He also wanted to be more independent in terms of transportation. Milestones staff helped him study for and pass his driver license test. Because he was able to drive to work, more job options were available to David. He found a new job at an engineering firm in a nearby city.

David has been an assembly worker at Hoffman Engineering since August 1995. He really enjoys his work and he has been able to try a variety of jobs because he has shown the interest, desire and ability to learn new tasks. His supervisor has had only praise for his excellent work!

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David decided to pursue a different job with the encouragement and support of project staff.

For Further Information

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Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612)626-8155; fax (612)624-9344
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/schooltowork/

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Life Skills Transitional Program
Houston Community College System/Central College
130 Holman, Room 102
Houston, TX 77004
(713) 630-1864

Mission

The Houston Community College/Houston Independent School District Life Skills Transitional Program enables students to participate to the fullest extent possible in all phases of life by providing the academic and social support at the local community college, while they are still enrolled in high school. Students become aware of realistic opportunities at the community college after graduating from high school.

Organization/Program Context

This program is a collaborative effort of the Houston Independent School District (HISD) and Houston Community College System (HCCS) with the support of the County Mental Health - Mental Retardation Authority, and the State Rehabilitation Commission. The Transitional Life Skills Program is one of several programs in the Department of Model Programs and Services to Students with Disabilities at Houston Community College System/Central College.

Description

The goal of this program is to prepare students to make a successful transition to adult life. Students are encouraged to establish an independent lifestyle and either enter post-secondary training or secure a job. They are referred to the Life Skills Transitional Program by their high school teachers, or frequently the students or family members hear about the program and pursue enrollment themselves. There is an interview and screening process students must undergo before acceptance into the program.

The Life Skills Transitional Program connects high school students to post-secondary opportunities by offering the transition course at the community college. First, students involved in the program are given an orientation to the college support services. Then, students enroll in the Core Course in Transition Planning during their senior year of high school. This course is offered on the Houston Community College Campus each semester (there are two semesters per school year), every weekday from 8 am - 12 pm. The class covers six areas of vocational and transition education: Vocational Readiness, College Information and Referral, Basic Life Skills Preparation, Seminars on Appropriate Behavior, Appreciation of Self and Others, and a Seminar Series focusing on Life Transitions and Choices. In the afternoon, most students either return to their high school for classes, go to work, or take classes at the community college. Career counseling is also provided by the community college and is available after the transition class, or in the afternoon.

When students have completed the transition class and have received their

Contact Person

Dennis Heller
Coordinator
(713) 630-1864

Community Setting

Large city. The students served in the Life Skills Transitional Program reflect the diverse/ multicultural population of Houston.

Population Served

Organization/Program

Houston Community College has a total enrollment of 13,500. The Department of Model Programs and Services to Students with Disabilities at Houston Community College System/ Central College has an enrollment of 700 students. Houston Independent School District has 15 high schools.

Model/Practice/Strategy

The Life Skills Transitional Program works with 117 students from the ages of 18 - 22, the majority of whom have mental retardation as their primary disability. Other areas of primary diagnosis include speech or language impaired, orthopedic impairments and autism.

Program Staff

Department Coordinator (HCCS)
1 full-time
- Coordinates all basic services to students with disabilities
- Provides seminars statewide and nationally to school districts and colleges interested in the program

Project Manager (HCCS)
1 full-time
- Manages the project
- Promotes transition
- Creates classes to meet needs of students with disabilities
- Participates in student evaluation, assessment and review

Teacher (HISD)
1 full-time
- Develops Individual Transition Plan (ITP)
- Instructs Core Couse in Transitional Planning
- Links students to community college services, and the community service providers to the students
- Promotes the program to other school districts

Assistant Teacher (HISD)
1 part-time
- Assists the teacher in the classroom

high school credits, they graduate from high school. Then, as part of Life Skills Transitional Program, students get assistance in finding a job, enrolling in post-secondary certificate programs or taking college continuing education classes to enhance lifelong learning. Students pursuing work can access a job coach who may assist them in an internship, or help find them a job in the community. The Life Skills Transitional Program also works with the State Rehabilitation Service to ensure that students continue to receive job support once they are employed.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Transition Planning Class - School-based Learning
The "Core Course in Transition Planning" curriculum includes subjects such as career planning, social behavior in the workplace, math and English skills necessary for work, and the rights of individuals with disabilities according to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Post-Secondary Education Connection - Connecting Activity
Students receive an orientation of the college and are encouraged to participate in student clubs and organizations as well as college-wide activities. They are expected to follow the code of conduct established by the college. Students can enroll in classes taught by both community college instructors and high school teachers. The presence of students with disabilities on the college campus has alleviated misunderstandings and fear in the college community about individuals with disabilities, as well as the fear the students have about college.

Marketing - Connecting Activity
Initial marketing of the program was aimed at students through the special education departments of the high schools and is largely responsible for the high numbers of applicants to the program. Marketing in-house has also contributed to communication among staff, students and families about the existence of the program. Publicity materials include a program brochure, video and advertisement on public access television. Articles in local newspapers have helped spread information about the program to the community.

What Makes it Work?

Setting
The college campus provides the opportunity for students to be in an adult setting as well as to become familiar with post-secondary education opportunities, requirements and the expectations on students enrolled in college.

Collaboration
The partnership between the school district and community college is essential to the Life Skills Transitional Program. The school district has as an objective to serve students in transition to adult life, and the college provides space and the appropriate setting. Collaboration also occurs through the numerous linkages with human service agencies that provide support and services to students with disabilities.

John's Story

John was scheduled to begin the Transitional Life Skills Program in the Fall of 1994. He decided, however, that he would rather attend a Work Adjustment Training/Personal Social Adjustment (WAT/PSA) program for janitorial training because he was anxious to start working. He chose the training program because he thought it would help him get a job faster. We wished him good luck and success and thought we wouldn't hear from him again.

Two months later we received a call from John, asking if it was too late to enroll in our program. We arranged a meeting (Admission Review and Dismissal or ARD) to discuss John's re-admission and review his transition and work goals. John was allowed to enter the program. After he became comfortable with the staff, we began to notice some unacceptable behavior. For example, John made-up stories to get attention and frequently embellished the truth. He was having a hard time fitting in, his schoolwork was marginal and he wasn't well received by the other students. He was at risk for being exited from this innovative program.

Students left for a holiday break. When they returned they were given semester exams. John had studied over the break and was very successful in his exams - the star of the class! This was his turning point; his punctuality improved, and so did his attitude. He became a class leader.

The personal development activities in the transition class seemed to help him the most. Role playing and open class discussion contributed to John's improved behavior and self confidence. He took great pride in the fact that he was attending class at a community college.

John was in the first group of students to be referred to the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and he was placed in a WAT/PSA different than the first one he tried. His goal was to become a baggage handler at the airport. John interviewed at the airports, but a job didn't materialize. However, he continued to go to WAT.

John didn't give up. He actively sought and received a position at a department store warehouse where he trains new employees, and he really enjoys it. He has come back to the college to share his experiences with the new transition class and he talks about working hard, being persistent, having a good attitude and making good decisions. He has become their role model. This terrific result we attribute to the opportunity given to John to attend the transition program on a college campus and John's motivation to succeed. This was definitely a rewarding experience for everyone involved.

* * * * * *

The transition class motivated John to learn and to be a good worker.

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Job Shadowing
Brentwood Elementary School
2500 Vinson Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34232
(941) 361-6230

Mission

The common goal is to provide the students with the opportunities to acquire life-long employability skills which may be applied in the local community, with local businesses willing to employ persons with disabilities.

Organization/Program Context

Brentwood Elementary School has over 1,000 students in grades K-5. The school is one of two elementary schools of North Sarasota County that serve special education students in addition to providing general education. At Brentwood, the students with mental retardation are divided by grades into three units or classrooms: K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade and 4th-5th grade.

Description

Job Shadowing is a program in a class of elementary school students. Both work-based and school-based learning is a part of the daily class routine. On the average, seven students go to a worksite for 1 1/2 - 2 hours each day. A work schedule is designed, allowing every student to participate in the work experience at least one time a week.

Four businesses participate in the Job Shadowing Program. Each month a schedule is arranged. For example, job shadowing takes place at a family restaurant Mondays and Wednesdays, a fast food restaurant on Tuesdays and Thursdays and once or twice a month all students work Friday at a department store. These partnerships are established through interviews with local business owners/managers, where Job Shadowing staff seek support and commitment for the program. Then "contracts" are written, stating the specific responsibilities of the business and those of the school. For example, a business might be given the following responsibilities: job training, employee orientation and identifying short-term objectives. Brentwood Elementary school would then be responsible for long-term planning and problem solving. On the job, students are matched with mentors. The classroom teacher also monitors the students at their job sites.

School-based learning occurs in the classroom where the students remaining at school (while others are at work) study academic subjects such as reading and writing using computers. The computers were purchased with money from a grant written specifically for the Job Shadowing Program. Sometimes students are asked to work on "classroom news" for the weekly school newsletter or they might produce their teacher's weekly letter to their parents. The students also use their computer skills to create signs for the local businesses involved in the program. For example, they once made a special

Contact Person

Brent Albert
EMH Teacher
(941) 361-6230

Community Setting

Large city. The students come from the local community and communities surrounding the city. Florida has a large tourism industry, resulting in many service jobs. For this reason, Job Shadowing focuses primarily on work experience in the service sector.

Population Served

Program/Organization
Brentwood Elementary School has over 1,000 students in grades K-5. Ten percent of the students are in special education.

Model/Practice/Strategy
Job Shadowing serves 17 students in 4th and 5th grade (ages 9-13) who have a primary diagnosis of mental retardation.

Program Staff

Teacher
1 full-time
- Establishes business partnerships
- Monitors and supervises students on the job
- Acts as liaison between the program and the community

Para-Professional
1 full-time
- Supports and supervises classroom computer area
- Visits job sites occasionally

birthday sign for a co-worker. They have also produced banners with motivational phrases for an employee workroom and menu inserts.

Students must complete daily assignments (both in class and homework) and exhibit good behavior to participate in Job Shadowing. This is monitored by the student folder. Each student has a folder which contains their completed work, homework and any notes from the teacher or parents. The student brings his/her folder home each day. Both the teacher and a parent sign the folder to verify that the student's work has been completed. Job Shadowing is conducted with the teacher's philosophy of the classroom - good behavior in class is reinforced and encouraged by giving the students opportunities, such as work experience, to motivate their learning.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Elementary School Work Experience - Work-based Learning
The Job Shadowing Program allows the students to explore work at an early age, to become familiar with their community through work and to increase their self esteem through this positive presence in the community. From these work activities students acquire life long employability skills.

Business Partnerships - Work-based Learning
Business partnerships begin with interviews between Job Shadowing Program staff and local business owners/managers where the program goals are explained. When a business agrees to participate contracts are written stating the responsibilities of the school and the business. Responsibilities may include specific job training, employee orientation, short-term objectives and long-range planning. One business provides an incentive for the students - after working their shift they can make their own lunch!

Community Support and Involvement - Connecting Activity
Local recognition of this activity through awards and newspaper and TV spots has helped to broaden awareness of and interest in young students with disabilities. Through this program students have participated in community activities, like preparing food baskets for Thanksgiving. Some students have worked in businesses where a family member is employed. Most work in places where they see friends and people they know. This grounds them in the realities of work and connects them to the community.

What Makes it Work?

Business Partnerships
Commitment of business participation in the project is secured through contracts. The businesses have work-based learning responsibilities such as job training and providing mentors on the job.

Parent Support
Parent support of the program grew as they saw the accomplishments and increased motivation of their children as a result of the work experiences in the community. Parents have helped with transportation and securing t-shirt uniforms and name tags for the students. The parents of Job Shadowing graduates are now seeking work experiences for students in the middle school.

Rachel's Story

Rachel is a 10 year old student with Down's syndrome. She is the middle child in her family which includes an older brother and a younger sister. Both of Rachel's parents are educators who are very involved in the education of their children. Rachel and her siblings participate in various youth programs such as softball, gymnastics, Special Olympics and church youth group. The family is very active and every child is noted for their uniqueness.

The Job Shadowing Program was introduced at a back to school open house. After hearing about the new program, Rachel's mother was apprehensive. She wasn't convinced that having the students go to work during the school day was a necessary addition to the regular class routine and academics.

Once the school term got under way and the academic routines were established the job shadowing began. Rachel was already a good student, but the work experience heightened her interest in school. Rachel excelled.... it was a super school year for her! In the morning she would bounce out of bed, dress in her uniform (shirts provided by the business partnerships), make sure her homework was completed and ask her mom to sign her student folder accordingly. The Job Shadowing Program was featured on the local television news. Rachel was in the spotlight and she became a school-wide star. The work experience and fame raised her confidence. She was more willing to attend her mainstream classes and she easily met academic hurdles.

Rachel's family became witness to the success of the program during a family outing to a restaurant, one of the business partnerships. All of the staff recognized Rachel. They teased about her night out and the roles she had played while at work. Rachel was a customer introducing her "work friends" to her family. Rachel's mother was quick to inform the Job Shadowing teacher about the positive experience at the restaurant. Job Shadowing was an integral part of Rachel's life in the community, at work and in school!

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Work experience has raised Rachel's confidence and connected her to the community.

For Further Information

School-to-Work Outreach Project
Institute on Community Integration (UAP)
University of Minnesota
101D Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 626-8155; fax (612)624-9344

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School to work is . . .

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Educational Reform that addresses the need for students to gain work experience and workplace skills while in school.

Partnerships between schools, employers and communities.

For <u>All</u> Students, kindergarten through 12th grade.

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Basic Elements of School-to-Work

School-based Learning - Instruction and experiences based on academic and occupational standards.

Work-based Learning - Workplace experience, structured training, mentoring and apprenticeships at job sites.

Connecting Activities - A variety of activities that build and maintain bridges between school, work and other adult environments.

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Futures' Alternative Educational Programs

A Division of Directions, Inc.
62 Washington Street
Middletown, CT 06457
(860) 347-5099

FUTURES
Creating Choices for Tomorrow

Mission

Futures works to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities and their families. This is accomplished through individualized combinations of person and family centered services and supports which are community based and contribute to systemic change. Futures customizes its approach, delivering only those individualized services in the person's home, school, job and community which are appropriate to each situation.

Organization/Program

Directions, Inc. is a state non-profit corporation, a generic service agency, with roots as a project of the University Affiliated Program at the University of Connecticut. Directions operates its entire state-wide service from one centralized main office and three strategically located home offices. Futures' Alternative Educational Programs are supported on a fee-for-service basis from funds allocated by schools to provide transition services for students with disabilities. Special tuition packages are also available to provide an umbrella of educational, vocational, recreational and/or community inclusion services for individuals over an entire semester or school year.

Description

Futures' Alternative Educational Programs are student-centered, based upon choice. Each student, along with his/her family, makes decisions regarding the range and types of services and supports that are needed.

Students are referred to Futures' Alternative Educational Programs by their parents, advocates, schools or state agencies. The student and his/her family members meet with program staff to gather and share information. From this, alternative education needs are determined. For example, in the transition-to-work area, a staff member may arrange vocational exploration opportunities which allow the student to form a basis for making informed choices about his/her vocational goals. Then, real employment opportunities will be arranged based on the student's interests, preferences and skills. Program funds are available in some circumstances to pay all or part of a student's "salary" during his/her initial employment period. Similar exploration opportunities are pursued in educational, recreational and community inclusion areas, with an emphasis placed on prioritizing each individual's preferences and choices, and then creating real-world situations which match these.

Contact Person

Pamela Don Aroma
Executive Director
(860)347-5099

Community Setting

This program serves individuals from throughout the state of Connecticut. As a result, this program must meet the needs of varying communities. For example, program staff deal with transportation problems in rural areas and gang membership concerns in urban locations.

Population Served

Organization/Program
Directions presently serves approximately 200 individuals, the majority of whom are adults and one third are of the ages 13 - 22. The organization serves persons with mental health issues as well as cognitive, sensory and physical impairments.

Model/Practice/Strategy
Futures' Alternative Educational Programs served 30 students in its first year. Almost half of those served were 19 -22 years old, with some students of the ages 14 - 18 and others 13 years and under. Most of these students have emotional/ behavioral disorders while others have traumatic brain injury, autism, deafness or hearing impairment, speech or language disorders, limitations in mobility and/or visual disabilities.

Program Staff

Service Coordinators
3 full-time; 1 part-time

- Supervises evaluators, job coaches and site developers regarding educational, vocational, and community inclusion issues
- Develops action plans for curriculum revision and meeting vocational goals
- Identifies obstacles which are interfering with services
- Assists in marketing the program
- Collects information from and provides routine feedback to program participants, staff and principle stakeholders

Evaluators, Job Coaches, Community-Inclusion Workers, Site Developers
5 full-time; others contracted on a per-case basis

- Meets with students to establish rapport and clarify their role in working with them
- Provides support and assistance to students at their educational, vocational and/or recreational sites
- Represents Futures' program to teachers, employers, co-workers, etc., who are involved in student activities
- Writes student progress reports and makes recommendations for further services

In all situations, program staff are available as needed, and the use of natural supports, such as co-workers, is encouraged. Mentors may also be hired to assist in accessing positive recreational services. Considerable effort is put into creating long term supports, both paid and natural, so that upon completion of Alternative Educational Programs there are services and supports in place for every individual as he/she transitions into the adult world.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Student-centered Career Planning & Exploration - School-based Learning
Staff work with students one-on-one to complete a personal profile that includes the student's preference and choices regarding job selection. Each student plays an active role, making decisions regarding his/her job placements and concerns he/she is confronted with on the job.

Individualized Services - Connecting Activities
Futures' Alternative Educational Programs allows students and their families to choose whatever services and people will best support them in their home, school, community and work settings. This is based upon the belief that every student requires a different service or combination of services and supports depending on his/her unique situation, disability, goals and interests. The result is long-term support for each student that continues after the student exits the program.

What Makes It Work?

Choice
Students and their families, with assistance from program staff and other service agencies, choose the services and supports they want and need.

Program Setting
Each student's plan takes place in his/her own community. For example, recreational opportunities and academic supports are developed near the student's home, while vocational exploration and job sites are found within commuting distance or on bus lines.

Cultural Sensitivity
Staff and services are tailored to the particular needs and desires of the student, keeping cultural issues in mind. Efforts are made to match cultural preferences as much as possible, which in many cases involves assigning staff of similar cultural/ethnic background.

Case Management
Effective case management is essential to the success of every student's plan. A case manager assigned to each student pulls together the particular plan for that student. Futures' staff are cross-trained to serve in more than one role for each student, providing cohesion and continuity to the student's program.

Organizational Structure
Futures' Alternative Education Programs employ a small number of full-time supervisory staff and direct case work is contracted per assignment to trained individuals. By minimizing full-time staff and maximizing the use of fully trained workers on a case-by-case basis, the program is able to be as flexible and individualized as it must be to reach students anywhere in the state.

Raymond's Story

At the age of 19, Ray was referred to Futures' Alternative Educational Programs by a county social worker. Homeless and living on the streets, he had been in and out of residential treatment centers for years. Although he was not attending school at the time of his referral, Ray was still eligible for public school services since he had been identified as a special needs student due to his conduct disorders.

Futures was asked to assist in providing employment opportunities and community support services for Ray in collaboration with the district board of education and the state Department of Children and Families. A supported living situation was arranged for him and a planning team was convened to discuss his educational and vocational needs. At the meeting, Ray made it clear that he had little interest in academic training, but he was very interested in learning how to do automobile repair and body work.

Ray began a supervised vocational exploration in a local automotive repair shop. Futures' program staff assessed the appropriateness of the job setting and Ray was asked if the job fit his interests and needs. The job coach assigned to work with Ray was a male of similar ethnic background and he had extensive experience in both auto mechanics and body repair. Ray divided his day between classes at school in the morning and his job site in the afternoon. A service coordinator assisted educators at Ray's school in creating a functional curriculum with sections on budgeting, problem solving, coping with stress, strategies for stress reduction, and parenting practices. In addition, while on the job, his job coach would provide functional academic training in reading, mathematics, problem solving, organization and planning as these topics related to work. Automobile repair manuals became an essential source of information for this portion of his training. Futures' staff also provided technical assistance and support to the individuals living with Ray... in effect supporting those who were supporting Ray.

Although there were a number of behavioral episodes during the first several months, primarily related to gang activities, it was clear that Ray had established an important relationship with his job coach. It was also clear that he valued his job and that the shop manager and other mechanics liked him, too. His school performance and attendance improved to exceptional levels. Prior to his involvement in Futures he missed an average of three or more days of school a week. With this new approach both his attendance and punctuality were almost perfect.

It has now been almost a year since Ray graduated from high school. He has a full-time job working for the auto repair company where he was trained. He handles oil changes, lubrication, and basic repair. He continues to learn and his boss is willing to increase his responsibilities as his skills develop.

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With the support of Alternative Educational Programs staff Raymond gained experience in a career area of his choice, finished high school and is now working as a mechanic.

For Further Information

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Connecting Activities
Maine Township High School District 207
2601 W. Dempster Street
Park Ridge, IL 60068
(847) 692-8489

Mission

Together we educate students to be informed, inquisitive, responsible, creative and reasoning individuals.

Organization/Program Context

Connecting Activities is a high school program that collaborates with the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). DORS is responsible for funding most staff positions in this program, including a counselor who has an office in each of the three high schools served by Connecting Activities. The program is also involved with a collaborative organization called TRAC (Transition Resource Agency Collaboration) which is instrumental in providing resources for school-to-work transition and making connections with employers and government agencies.

Description

Connecting Activities includes a variety of school-to-work experiences such as school-based learning and work-based activities like job shadowing and job trials. In addition to their daily school classes, students come to Connecting Activities for vocational training. Some students participate in the program over summer vacation from school. Students are referred to the program by parents, the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Counselor, teachers, or students may refer themselves.

The Connecting Activities program consists of five steps which begin with students of the ages 13 - 14. Students participate in the program throughout their high school years and into job placement or post-secondary education. The steps are as follows:

- Early work experiences, job shadowing - Small groups of students (ages 13 - 14) participate in job shadowing which may include performing job tasks.
- Community Work Training (CWT) classes - This class is for 16 - 21 year old students. The class covers subjects such as job applications and job performance expectations. Students might work at community jobs in addition to taking these classes.
- Community job trials - Students work in jobs that match their interests and receive a grade for their work which is based upon employer evaluations. At this step, a variety of assessment activities also occur, such as formal vocational evaluation and situational assessment.
- Supported employment program or community job placement - Junior students are placed in jobs according to their needs. They may continue in a job through their Senior year and after graduation. Mentors are

Contact Person

Diane Starkey
Transition Counselor
(847) 692-8489

Community Setting

Small city/suburb. There are 3 high schools involved in this program. Students come from 5 suburbs of Chicago and an un-incorporated section of the city. These communities include people from all social-economic classes.

Population Served

Program/Organization
The Maine Township Special Education Program (MTSEP), serves approximately 1,200 students. The TRAC collaborative, which is a part of MTSEP, serves students in 2 school districts (which include 5 high schools).

Model/Practice/Strategy
There are 100 students served by Connecting Activities, most are 13-18 years old and some students are 19-22 years old. The majority of students have one of the following as their primary disability diagnosis: serious emotional disturbance, learning disabilities, mental retardation, or orthopedic impairments. Other areas of primary diagnosis include deaf or hard of hearing, visual disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injury and Prader Willie.

Program Staff

Supported Employment Program Coordinator (DORS & School)
1 full-time
- Develops community work sites
- Coordinates service delivery among the collaborating agencies/organizations
- Markets the program to employers, the community and governmental departments
- Conducts a class for students with physical and multiple disabilities

Transition Counselor (DORS & School)
1 full-time
- Coordinates DORS services with school and community resources
- Interviews students to determine their needs and eligibility for services
- Participates in student vocational counseling and prepares student Individual Work Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP)

Job Coach (DORS)
1 part-time
- Instructs students in work procedures and employer expectations
- Arranges workplace accommodations for students
- Documents work incidents, progress, etc. of each student

Transition Coordinator (DORS)
1 full-time
- Develops contracts between the state and high schools, special education cooperatives and other secondary academic institutions
- Provides consultant services on vocational training

Teacher (School)
All special education teachers
- Each student has a case coordinator who is their teacher

used as natural supports for the students in community employment settings. Assistive technology is also applied to work situations.
- Follow-up and extended services - Students can continue in their job with follow-up by program staff (social services may continue to provide services such as job coaching). Interested students are referred to post-secondary education.

Students can enter Connecting Activities at any of the above levels. Exit from the program is determined student by student; services are still available after graduation and into post-secondary schooling.

The Connecting Activities program is supported by TRAC (Transition Resource Agency Council) which provides cooperative programming for employment. TRAC includes a number of employment and rehabilitation agencies and educational institutions that work together to provide transition and adult services to persons with disabilities. For example, mentors used in Connecting Activities are formally trained by an adult service agency that is a partner in TRAC. The council also encourages employer linkages through events such as job fairs and parent workshops. Parents are involved in the program through Next Steps which provides workshops on topics such as social security, residential options, employment and transition. Of the students in Connecting Activities, 90% are employed in community based jobs upon closure of their case, according to statistics from the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Exemplary School-to-Work Components

Collaboration - Connecting Activity
Connecting Activities provides a coherent array of services and a variety of supports for their students. This is largely due to collaboration with government agencies and parent and community groups. TRAC (Transition Resource Agency Council) is also instrumental in bringing these resources and services together.

Early Services and Supports - Connecting Activity
Students of the ages 13 and 14 begin to explore work through job shadowing and group visits to work sites. The Connecting Activities Program includes these students in school-to-work activities throughout their high school years and post-secondary experiences.

What Makes it Work?

Effective Model
Connecting Activities follows a clear path which includes strong supports along the way. The result is that students participate in school-to-work activities until they graduate and are able to reach and maintain their goals.

Collaborative Partnerships
Partnerships between school districts, employers, community services and government agencies are formed with the support of TRAC. Connecting Activities uses the connections made through TRAC to access a variety of employers for their students and to establish community support for students in the world of work. Members of this collaborative work well together; each has an area of expertise and everyone taps into the other's experience and knowledge.

Tammy's Story

Tammy is a young woman with muscular dystrophy who entered Connecting Activities with little work experience and few community connections. Because of her busy class schedule of college preparation classes, Tammy participated in Community Work Training Classes during the summer. Tammy had few experiences outside of home and school, so much of her training involved helping her feel comfortable in the community and access services such as mass transit with lift service.

Access to transportation allowed her to be placed in a job which was accessible by public transportation and her training in computers was useful in her transition from school to work. She worked in the office of a large electronics manufacturing and distributing company. The Job Coach and Supported Employment Progam Coordinator helped her use technological devices to make her work easier. The desk was lowered to allow for her wheel chair, and the phone was adapted for her use. Co-workers were also helpful. For example, a secretary took her to lunch and a co-worker from Human Resources aided her in the restroom. An important result of this successful job experience was that Tammy's self-esteem was heightened.

Tammy's confidence is manifested in her presence in the community, such as trips to the mall and restaurants with friends. She is now a college freshman, enjoying her university and community experiences.

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Work experience heightened Tammy's self confidence and helped her feel more comfortable in the community.

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